



APEP



AFGHANISTAN PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM (APEP)



BRIEFING PACKET

FEBRUARY 2005

APEP BRIEFING PACKET

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Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP)

Program Overview

Education, after years of neglect and worse, will be the foundation of economic growth and poverty reduction.

*--The National Development Framework,
Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan*

The National Development Framework that is guiding the first steps in Afghanistan's recovery has correctly identified education as one of the nation's primary challenges. The formal school system overseen by the Ministry of Education is providing classes for 5.2 million Afghan children.



During the Taliban era, thousands of children failed to receive any education. They are now too old to fit comfortably in the formal school system. But by being older, they have the capacity to learn basic educational information quickly.

Working closely with the Ministry of Education and using its curriculum, APEP is providing these over-aged students with an opportunity to learn basic education at an accelerated pace.

The Goal of APEP is simple: **To increase the quality of, and access to primary education for all.** By all, we especially mean girls and young women who were excluded from schools in the past.

But we also mean, children and young people in remote villages and among nomadic communities whose educational opportunities have long been limited.

The education provided by APEP will provide older learners with basic skills to get a job, and younger learners the possibility of joining the formal school system at the grade level for students their own age.

Challenges to Education in Afghanistan

APEP comes at a time when, after 23 years of war, the destruction of the Afghan economy and much of the country's infrastructure, and the exodus of millions of Afghans who fled to safety in neighboring countries, the Transitional Government is faced with huge challenges to provide education to the children of Afghanistan. Among them are:

Shortage of qualified teachers



According to the Ministry of Education's Teacher Training Department, the average class size in Afghanistan is 53 students to one teacher. In some places, there are 70 or more students being taught by a single teacher. The internationally-accepted optimal ratio is 35 students per teacher.

Growing number of students as refugee families return

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, nearly 3.3 million Afghans who fled during the years of turmoil have returned to Afghanistan since March 2000. Another 450,000 internally displaced persons have returned to their homes with UN assistance. The actual numbers of returning refugees is likely to be even higher.

This influx of families, many with children who have never received any education at all, has put a huge strain on the Afghan school system.

Prevalence of Rote Instruction

Many of these students find themselves in classes where the accepted practice has been to stress memorization over understanding. As a result, there are countless examples of students who have been graduated from primary school without having attained even a basic ability to read, or the ability to analyze what they have been taught.

Insufficient educational materials and school supplies

Many classrooms in the formal school system lack even the most basic materials needed for instruction – chalk boards, visual aids, maps, instructional materials, and so on.

Unsafe and inadequate school buildings

Thousands of schools were destroyed or badly damaged during the war years. Some progress has been made by another USAID program to reconstruct some of the damaged schools, but many schools are still in an unusable state.

Traditional values that oppose modern education, especially for girls

Until recently, it was very difficult for girls to attend school. Also, many parents are fearful of allowing their daughters to leave their homes unless the schools are nearby.

Serving rural areas where population is greatest and educational opportunities are fewest

More than half of the Afghan population lives in rural areas. Many are in very remote places. Their children have little or no opportunity to receive any kind of formal education, unless they are among the relatively few who have a school in their village.

APEP's Principal Activities

APEP was designed to address several of the challenges faced by the Ministry of Education.

Accelerated learning classes for over-aged students

Working through five Afghan NGOs, APEP has established accelerated learning programs in 17 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

Teacher training in accelerated learning methods



A P E P



In order to teach students, APEP first had to train teachers. APEP has used what we call a “cascade method” of training to prepare the largest number of teachers in the shortest possible time.

The cascade method works this way: three Master Trainers are assigned to each province, where they train 40 Provincial Trainers, each of whom then trains 400 Village Teachers. Through this cascade method training has been given to 6,800 Village Teachers across the 17 provinces where APEP operates. Incidentally, the Village Teachers are also sometimes called Mentors.

Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT)

In addition to those teachers who receive training in person, an estimated 25,000 others are being exposed to the same kind of ideas through APEP’s radio-based training program called *It’s Great to Learn*. This program carries new approaches to teaching to every part of Afghanistan over 23 local radio stations, as well as via Radio Afghanistan and Radio Free Afghanistan.

Textbook production and distribution

Over the past two years, APEP has overseen the printing and distribution of more than 26 million textbooks. This has made it possible for every student from Grades 1 to 12 to have textbooks of their own.

The management of the textbook printing and distribution was handled by the American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG), one of APEP’s partner organizations. The actual distribution of the books to schools across Afghanistan was done by the World Food Program (WFP) who have a national distribution network in place for transporting food to all 34 provinces.



Textbooks are being air shifted to Kabul to be distributed nationwide

These texts were reprints of books that had been used in the past. Under a different program that is not part of APEP, USAID is supporting the writing of new textbooks that are part of an overhaul of the entire curriculum.

Technical support to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education have welcomed APEP’s offers of support in program development, strategic planning, policy and education reform, communications and public relations, monitoring and evaluation, teacher training, and English language teacher education.

AEP has supplied five specialists to assist the Ministries. Two serve in the Ministry of Higher Education. One serves in the Ministry of Education. Two serve with the Academic Council on Education.

Implementing Partners:

- Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII), prime contractor



- Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), accelerated learning
- Afghanistan Development Association (ADA), accelerated learning
- Aguirre International, monitoring and evaluation
- American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG), textbook production and distribution
- Children in Crisis (CiC), accelerated learning teacher training support
- Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR), accelerated learning
- Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), accelerated learning
- Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA), accelerated learning
- Media Support Solutions Ltd. (MSS), radio-based teacher training

Technical Approach

APEP's helps tens of thousands of overage students, especially girls, reach their appropriate grade level in reduced time. The accelerated training and learning approach enables students to complete grades at two or three times the regular pace. APEP has developed a specialized trainer-of-trainers "cascade" program to give mentors (village teachers) the skills to meet the demands of accelerated learning and the unique needs of the learners. They must teach the content thoroughly and quickly, using learner-centered methods and maximizing time spent in the classroom. The project provides basic education (Grades 1 to 6) for Afghan youth, targeting students aged 9-16 and operates in 17 provinces.

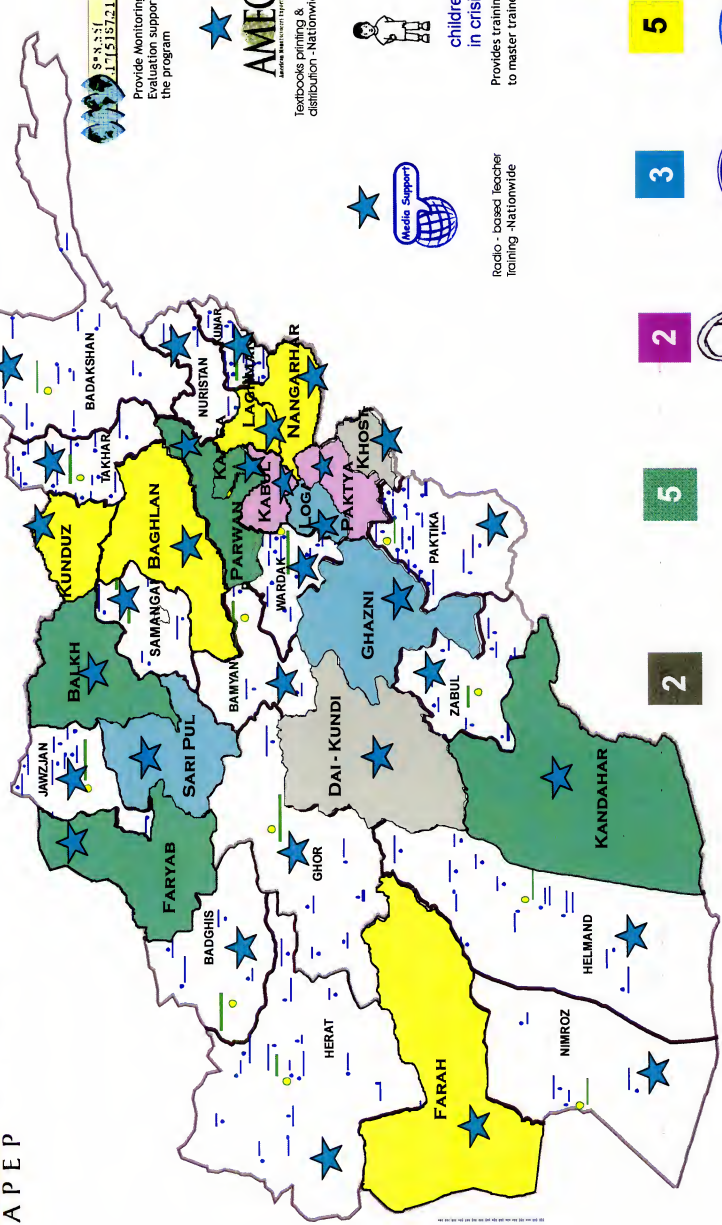
Afghan partners working to ensure the sustained impact of APEP's activities:

- Five Afghan NGO partners with skilled and professional staff have led community-based accelerated learning efforts and will ensure the sustained impact of the APEP.
- Hundreds of communities where APEP implements its activities demonstrate full support of quality education with the participation of local shuras, village education committees, teachers, and parents
- The Ministries of Education and Higher Education work closely with APEP partners to ensure access to provincial education officials, reliable student and school data, and instructional materials

Finally, the government of Afghanistan and APEP are committed to rebuild the country and address the challenges facing the Afghan communities, students, teachers and the education ministries nationwide.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE: 17 PROVINCES

A P E P



Provide Monitoring & Evaluation support to the program



AMEG
Assessment Monitoring & Evaluation Group
Textbooks printing & dissemination - Nationwide



children in crisis
Provides training to master trainers



Radio - based teacher training - Nationwide

5

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2

5

2



DHSA



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Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) An Overview

The Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP), managed by Creative Associates International, Inc., and funded by USAID, is working closely with Afghanistan's Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and five local implementing partners in a comprehensive program to enrich the quality of, and access to, basic education. Four main areas are being addressed:

1. ACCELERATED LEARNING: Accelerated Learning has been developed to provide primary education to nearly 170,000 over-aged students, especially girls, whose educations were interrupted or denied by two decades of war in Afghanistan. Accelerated learning allows students to complete two grades per year. The goal is to bring learners up to their appropriate grade level then move them into government schools. Some 6,778 teachers have been trained to lead these classes. A team of 680 teacher trainers prepared them, having been trained themselves by APEP Master Trainers. Approximately 40% of the teachers are women. APEP has provided each teacher with instructional materials and classroom supplies. Students in the accelerated learning classes have received backpacks containing basic school items. APEP's accelerated learning program grew from a pilot activity for 15,000 students in three provinces to a major supplemental education effort providing instruction to over-aged students in 17 provinces. About 56% of APEP's accelerated learning students are girls.

2. TEXTBOOK PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION: Textbooks, a one-time emergency initiative in 2003, has become a central and recurring component of USAID's direct assistance to the Ministry of Education and schools nationwide. The Ministry of Education has neither the funds nor its own printing capacity to meet the needs of its students for textbooks..

APEP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and American Manufacturers Export Group, has printed 27 million of the Ministry's textbooks in both Dari and Pashto. Approximately 16.2 million of them were printed in 2004 alone. The textbooks are for Grades 1 through 12 in all secular subjects, and have been distributed to schools throughout Afghanistan.

3. TEACHER TRAINING: APEP has created, and is conducting, a specialized trainer-of-trainers program to enable teachers to develop skills they need to deal with the special requirements of accelerated learning. The majority of the accelerated learning teachers are themselves not high school graduates and most have never attended teacher training programs.



Accelerated learning students at a class in Kabul organized by the Afghan Women's Educational Center, one of APEP's five local partner organizations.



USAID has supported the printing of 27 million textbooks for Afghan schools nationwide.

Supporting APEP's teacher training session is its radio-based teacher training (RTT) program.

USAID initiated the RTT program in 2003 and aimed it at three provinces. RTT proved to be an economical and effective way of reaching large numbers of teachers. In subsequent months, RTT has continued to increase its broadcast area and is now available nationwide via two national broadcasters and 26 local radio stations.

As RTT grew, it augmented its radio-based teacher training program by creating and broadcasting new programs and introducing social messages into the weekly programs. In 2003, RTT produced and broadcast 148 programs which aired twice weekly in both Dari and Pashto. In May 2004, the schedule expanded to daily broadcasts, which led to 594 programs being aired in 2004. In part to measure the impact of RTT, a formal radio-based course has been offered to supplement the teacher training broadcasts. Nearly 10,000 teachers registered for the course.



APEP has produced and designed teacher training manuals on child-centered methods.

Interestingly, 30% of the teachers trained to lead APEP accelerated learning classes also teach in the formal school system. Many say they are also regular listeners to RTT broadcasts. As a result, the teaching methodologies being offered by APEP are finding their way into the formal school system.

4. EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES (ESS) TO

EDUCATION MINISTRIES: APEP's Education Support Services (ESS) has made education, management, and technical specialists available to key ministries and associated agencies. Seven professional staff have been detailed to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Academic Council on Education to improve policy formulation, strategic planning and program development, and monitoring and evaluation.

Although APEP was initially designed as a primary education program, the need to establish linkages with higher education activities quickly became apparent, especially in the area of teacher education. A teacher education assessment was commissioned by USAID in late 2003 to analyze pre- and in-service teacher training in Afghanistan. From that, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder initiative developed. By mid-2004, the Ministry of Education had recognized the value of this team approach and adopted the Teacher Education Program (TEP), as it is now known, as a major Ministry-led initiative.

By the end of 2004, TEP had developed a training approach, designed training materials, and prepared trainers for nationwide in-service teacher training. Equally important was the response of the international donor community, which has pledged millions of dollars in long-term funding for TEP.



Dr. H.B. Ghazanfar, Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Literature at Kabul University participating in the "Conflict Management in the workplace" training provided by APEP to 25 high ranking officials of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The size and scope of APEP changed dramatically from the relatively modest primary education activity it was at its inception in January 2003 to the expanded program it is today.

Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP)

An Overview of Impacts & Achievements through December 2004

ACCELERATED LEARNING FOR OVER AGE STUDENTS

- Mobilized support for education in more than 3,000 communities in 17 provinces of Afghanistan
- Established nearly 6,800 accelerated learning classes where a team of 680 teacher trainers trained 6,778 teachers (30% are MoE teachers)
- Enrolled nearly 170,000 students (about 56% girls) in accelerated Learning classes

Period of performance:

January 2003 - December 2005

Obligated Amount:

US\$ 87,903,9468

Expenditures to December 2004:

US\$ 40,489,591

RADIO-BASED TEACHER TRAINING REACHING OVER 95% OF AFGHANISTAN

- USAID initiated the RTT program in 2003 and in January RTT was expanded to 17 provinces
- RTT aired 594 program in Pashto and Dari in 2004
- In part to measure the impact of RTT, a formal radio-based course has been offered to supplement the teacher training broadcasts. Nearly 10,000 primary school teachers registered for the course
- Produced & broadcast weekly teacher education program via two national and 26 local radio stations

EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES:

APEP supports the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education through the services of seven education specialists in the areas of:

- Program Development and Strategic Planning (Ministry of Education)
- Education Policy Reform (Academic Council on Education)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education)
- Teacher Education (Ministry of Higher Education)
- English Language Instruction (Ministry of Higher Education)
- Public Relations/Communications and Information Technology for both the education ministries

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM:

- A teacher education assessment was commissioned by USAID in late 2003 to analyze pre- and in-service teacher training in Afghanistan. From that, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder initiative developed.
- By mid-2004, the Ministry of Education had recognized the value of this team approach and adopted the Teacher Education Program (TEP), as it is now known, as a major Ministry-led initiative.
- By the end of 2004, TEP had developed a training approach, designed training materials, and prepared trainers for nationwide in-service teacher training.

TEXTBOOK PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION IN COORDINATION WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION:

- Printed and distributed 27 million textbooks for Afghan schools nationwide for Grades 1 through 12 in all secular subjects
- Approximately 16.2 million of the textbooks were printed and distributed in 2004 alone

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- Afghan Development Association (ADA), accelerated learning
- Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), accelerated learning
- Aguirre International, monitoring and evaluation
- American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG), textbook production and distribution
- Children in Crisis (CiC), teacher training support & materials development
- Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR), accelerated learning
- Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), accelerated learning
- Development & Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA), accelerated learning
- Media Support Solutions (MSS), radio-based teacher training



APEP is a partnership

Who is who at APEP?

The Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) provides primary education to older learners in Afghanistan. In just over a year, more than 169,716 learners have been enrolled in APEP classes. Another 10,000 are expected to be enrolled by the end of 2004.

The key to APEP's success has been the teamwork among the several organizations who are its partners. Five Afghan development organizations, along with three American and two British groups, are working together to provide basic education for those were unable to obtain in during the recent years of turmoil.

Because these learners are older than normal school-aged children, they are able to learn more quickly. What would normally be taught in the formal education system in two years is taught to these over-aged learners in only one.



***Representatives of APEP's partners organizations
at APEP office in Kabul***

This method of speeding up the teaching of basic subjects is called "accelerated learning." Along with the quickened pace of these classes, a new type of teaching method called "learner-centered education" is helping students master what they are being taught more rapidly than with traditional teaching methods.

Students who participate in these accelerated learning classes will be prepared to join the formal school system once they have caught up to their grade level.

The APEP partners have brought this accelerated learning and learner-centered education to some 5,000 communities spread across 17 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

The partners are led by a team from the American educational organization, Creative Associates International, Inc., which is based in Washington, DC. Creative Associates have brought together experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Malawi, and Australia to manage APEP.

The actual organization of the accelerated learning classes has been conducted by five Afghan non-governmental organizations: the Afghan Development Association (ADA), The Afghanistan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), and Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA).



Supporting the efforts of these local partners are two American groups, Aguirre International, and the American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG). They are joined by two British-based organizations, Children in Crisis (CiC), and Media Support Solutions (MSS).

APEP is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of its wide-ranging efforts to improve the quality of life in Afghanistan. USAID obtains its funds from the American people.

Creative Associates

Creative Associates has many years of experience in bringing educational opportunities to people living in countries that are engaged in armed conflict, or have recently emerged from it. At present, for example, Creative Associates teams are working amid the hostilities in Iraq. Creative Associates manages projects in 54 countries.



The moving force behind Creative Associates is two women, Charito Kruvant and Mimi Tse. Along with two other women, they established Creative Associates in 1977 to pursue innovative educational projects for very young children who were living in difficult circumstances in the United States. As the years passed, their interests became international.

Charito Kruvant is a native of Bolivia, and Mimi Tse was born in China. They both came to the United States as students. Even before they formed Creative Associates they separately resolved to find ways to share the many opportunities they had found in America.

One of their first international projects was to bring basic education to war-torn Central America during the 1980's. From that experience, they developed the expertise that has led Creative Associates to Afghanistan and APEP.

Charito Kruvant, who is the president of Creative Associates, likes to say that her organization "is an ambitious company with a humble soul. We aim to strengthen civil society and create and nourish global access to quality, equitable educational opportunity."

The APEP team is led by Peter Parr. Though born in America, he grew up in Egypt and lived for many years in various parts of Africa and the Middle East. He worked in Afghanistan briefly once before, just prior to the Soviet invasion.

The APEP team in Kabul that he leads numbers more than 50, of whom more than half are Afghan professionals.

Peter Parr recently noted that "one of the reasons that the APEP project has moved forward as well as it has, as quickly as it has, and effectively as it has is because Creative Associates brought on local Afghan development organizations. Using local knowledge, local skills, local connections, and



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a local understanding of the environment, these organizations have been able to take our project to the remotest villages and explain to the people there why education is important.”

In 2003, APEP engaged its first two local partners, Afghan Development Association (ADA), and Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA). Together they developed the APEP education approach in three provinces: Baghlan, Faryab, and Nangarhar. ADA and CHA were chosen to lead this initial stage of the project because both organizations had long histories of involvement in Afghanistan.

Afghan Development Association (ADA)

ADA is an Afghan-managed NGO implementing reconstruction and development programs in Afghanistan. Since its inception in 1990, ADA has worked with individuals, local communities and individuals to enable them to take charge of their destinies and become less vulnerable to exploitation.



Through its reconstruction and development programs, ADA has worked in different and sensitive political and military situations. The work has contributed toward food self-sufficiency, job and employment creation, provision of education and organizing people to meet future challenges.

ADA projects aim to prepare individuals to be more peaceful citizens and leave the era of war, hate and conflict. Numerous good results and improvements in the socio-economic conditions of many villages have been brought about through the work of the ADA staff with the local communities.

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)

Coordination of Humanitarian assistance (CHA) was created in 1988 by Afghan volunteers to provide emergency aid for war victims in the field, to assist with the rehabilitation of rural and urban life, and to work with communities for sustainable development in Afghanistan.



The first priority was to provide emergency help, in the form of food and medical aid for civilians who remained in Afghanistan during the years of conflict. But CHA also assisted returning refugees and their communities by rehabilitating basic infrastructure, such as irrigation systems, roads, schools and clinics. In addition, some social services such as primary education and basic health and medical services were also provided.

Long-term programs in permanent rehabilitation and development became possible only in 1992 when refugees started returning to Afghanistan on a large scale.

CHA's main office was originally set up in Quetta, Pakistan. After the security situation in Afghanistan's western provinces stabilized in 1993, CHA's main office moved to Herat. More recently, CHA has based itself in Kabul in order to facilitate contact with donor agencies.



APEP Expands

In 2004, based on the successful work of ADA and CHA in the original three provinces, APEP expanded to 14 additional provinces. Three new partners were invited to work with APEP: The Afghanistan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR), and Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA).

ADA started classes in Farah, Kunduz, and Laghman provinces in addition to those they were already running in Baghlan and Nangarhar. CHA expanded into Balkh, Kapisa, Parwan and Kandahar provinces, in addition to their classes in Faryab province

Afghanistan Women's Educational Center (AWEC)

Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC) is non-profit, non-political and non-governmental organization with three principal aims. It seeks to improve the status of women as leaders and agents of positive change in an Islamic and traditional Afghan society. Secondly, it works towards improving living conditions of marginalized women and children. And third, it promotes women's self-sufficiency and independence.



Established in 1991 in Islamabad to assist Afghan refugees, AWEC was the first resource center for Afghan refugee women there. AWEC's key activities include literacy programs, health education, skills development and support networks counseling for children and women, information on children's and women's rights, vocational training for women and adolescents, medical assistance for children and women.

AWEC is proud that it is the only women's NGO chosen to implement the APEP project. AWEC has 10,235 students enrolled in its accelerated learning classes in Kabul province, and 10,115 students in Paktya, of whom more than 50% are girls.

Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)

Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR) is an independent, non-governmental and non-political organization, created at the initiative of a group of Afghans in October 1989 to contribute to the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.



Since its establishment, CoAR's strategy has evolved from merely providing cross-border, short-term emergency/relief services, to long-term development programs which mainly focus on community mobilization as a tool for ensuring project sustainability and gradual return of refugees in the country. CoAR's programs involve agriculture, engineering, women's development, education and veterinary medicine.



CoAR became a partner in APEP in January, 2004, and assumed the responsibility for implementing the accelerated learning program in Logar, Ghazni and Saripul provinces.

The planned target for training village teachers was 1,200. To date, however, CoAR has trained 1,206 village teachers who are leading accelerated learning classes for 30,000 over-aged students. Some 248 of these teachers are also employed by the Ministry of Education.

Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA)

Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA) is running APEP classes in Uruzgan / Dai Kundai and Khost provinces. Both provinces continue to have a high incidence of violence. Nonetheless, DHSA has succeeded because it bases its approach to all projects on a deep respect for the culture of the people with whom it works. Special emphasis is placed in honoring religious opinions and village *shuras*.

DHSA

When DHSA arrives in a village, it explains the aims of APEP first to the religious leaders, and then to the elders. Then they are careful to hire someone identified by the leaders as an honest and respected person to serve as the APEP community mobilizer. DHSA provides training to these community mobilizers and works with them as they consult with their village education *shuras* to establish male and female community education centers and to select the mentors to lead the APEP classes.

DHSA then turns to the local staff of the Ministry of Education to identify educated people who could serve as Provincial Trainers and prepare the Village Teachers to lead the accelerated learning classes. They also involve the local Provincial Police and Army Commanders.

One of DHSA's proudest achievements is having established APEP classes in villages in the Mangal, Zadran, Jaji and Tani valleys in Khost province that never had schools before.

To date, DHSA has enrolled 4,975 girls and 5,025 boys in Khost Province, and 5,979 girls and 4,021 boys in Dai Kundi Province.

Other International Partners

An essential part of the APEP process has been training the teachers who ultimately lead the accelerated learning classes. APEP has devised a system where Master Trainers have been leading training programs for teachers who serve as Provincial Trainers. These Provincial Trainers then prepare the Village Teachers, or mentors, to conduct the actual accelerated learning classes.

As part of this training process, manuals had to be prepared for the Master Trainers, the Provincial Trainers and the Village Teachers. To handle that task, APEP turned to the British development organization, Children in Crisis (CiC).



Children in Crisis

Children in Crisis (CiC) was established in 1993, in the United Kingdom, under the patronage of the Duchess of York.

The organization aims to help improve the lives of children around the world affected by conflict, deprivation, poverty, or other hidden crises, by working with local communities to provide education, healthcare and protection. CiC now works in 11 countries in Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa.



The CiC Afghanistan program in Afghanistan was established in 1997. Its primary focus has been the development and provision of quality, primary level teacher training and support.

In addition to its teacher training activities, CiC also runs a highly acclaimed Day Care Centre for 500 children in the Karte Char area of Kabul, and four Street Working Children's centers, which cater to the educational and welfare needs of 120 vulnerable children.

CiC became a partner in APEP in April 2003. The organization is responsible for designing the training programs for the accelerated learning project, and for developing teaching and training materials. CiC trains the Master Trainers who in turn train the Provincial Trainers.

American Manufacturers Export Group

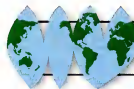
The American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG) is a U.S.-based organization that provides technical services for humanitarian and economic development projects world-wide. For more than 20 years, AMEG has provided international project support and has procured a wide variety of commodities for projects in more than 100 countries.



AMEG is currently assisting Creative Associates procure and distribute some 26 million text books for use in schools across Afghanistan. AMEG is also distributing educational materials to school children in Iraq as part of another Creative Associates project.

Aguirre International

Since it was founded in 1982, Aguirre International has worked in more than 15 countries and throughout the United States to help organizations with strategic planning, program evaluation, and decision making.



**AGUIRRE
INTERNATIONAL**

In Afghanistan, Aguirre is working with the APEP team to develop modern monitoring and evaluation systems. These will help APEP ensure that its accelerated learning students receive a



Accelerated Learning encourages armed people to put down their guns

Afghanistan's northern Kapisa Province has been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting during the recent years of turmoil. Interestingly, it has also become one the provinces that has most readily embraced the accelerated learning program of the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP).

A chat with Ghulam Shah, 65, a life-long resident of Kapisa and a member of a militia led by a local commander, offers some insights. Mr. Shah recently described how he and his 14-year-old son, who is also a member of the militia, passed an accelerated learning class while on patrol in their village. Both were armed.



Former militia man is listening at the radio-based program of APEP

"My son watched the class and stood for a while listening to the voice of the students, Mr. Shah recalled. "He asked me a lot of questions about this class. And that night he told this story to his sisters and mother many times." Neither his son nor his daughters have ever had formal education owing to the disruptions of war.

"I was thinking for a long time that night," Mr. Shah continued. "Finally I decided to allow my son to put his gun down and join the class." The next day, Mr. Shah went to the class and asked the teacher to enroll his son.

"The teacher encouraged my son, and now he is regularly going to school. My daughters are between 24 and 30 years old and always asking me to think about them as well.

"My son has promised them that he will help his sisters soon."



Girls' enrollment increases from 18% to 74.9%

The Afghanistan Primary Education Project (APEP) is making a special effort to help girls and young women who were denied the opportunity to attend school during Afghanistan's recent troubled past to gain a basic education.

During APEP's first year, however, the numbers of girls who were enrolled remained disappointingly small, especially in rural areas such as Nangrahar province. But those young women who did attend proved to be excellent promoters of APEP's Accelerated learning approach, which moves over-age students rapidly through basic education, teaching two grades in a year.



The education supported by APEP is providing older female learners with basic skills to get a job, and younger learners the possibility of joining the formal school system at the grade level for students their own age.

The young women explained to their friends what they were learning, and helped break down the concerns that the parents of other girls in the villages had. When the second year of classes began, the percentage of girls enrolled had risen dramatically from 18% to a stunning 74.9 %, which is 3,746 girls out of a total of 5,000 students.

Separate classes for boys and girls are the general norm throughout Afghanistan. Also, parents generally prefer to have women teach their daughters. But in Nangrahar, the demand for classes for girls is so great that communities and parents have given their permission for 49 male teachers to lead classes for girls.

In a related development, the APEP monitoring team in Nangrahar has noticed that the enthusiasm for Accelerated Learning has spread even to the nomadic families in the area, many of whom are enrolling their youngsters in the classes.

APEP Impact Felt Throughout Afghanistan

In Jalalabad, Afghanistan, two dozen girls are seated on the ground in an open-air class. They are reading aloud and responding to their teacher with their own textbooks provided by the USAID-funded Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) implemented by Creative Associates International.

Dressed in colorful traditional shawls, several girls are competing for their teacher's attention---much like school kids in classrooms all over the world.

But these girls, whose ages range from 7 to about 16, seated side by side are learning the same lessons.

This is accelerated learning provided by APEP, an innovative program that helps students whose educations have been interrupted by war or other hardships regain years of schooling in about one academic year with intensive class instruction in environments that were once not conducive to learning.

Already, many students have seen the impact of education and it has changed their lives.

One student, Salma, 14, said: "I want to become a teacher and have my own classroom just like the teacher here."

Salma's family were recently refugees in Pakistan and have returned home. "Now we have returned to our country and we would like to continue our education and we like being a part of the accelerated learning programs," said Salma. "Every child needs to be educated."

Salma is among about 15,000 students who took part in 2003 in APEP's accelerated learning program, a component that makes primary education available to those who also may have had no access to or were unprepared to enter the formal education system. Along with its other components, APEP has led to a revitalized enthusiasm for education across Afghanistan.

In late 2003, Creative Associates documented APEP's impact on students like Salma and her classmates elsewhere on video. Designed to communicate APEP's effort to stakeholders, including USAID and potential program partners, it is a portrait of APEP's successes and lets beneficiaries like Salma speak for themselves.

The APEP video produced by Rob Davenport, Lazarina Todorova and Bill Kruvant with support from Creative Associates President Charito Kruvant, seeks to open new ways to document and inform clients about Creative's impact on beneficiaries in projects in conflict and post-conflict societies. The 17-minute film takes the viewer to the front lines of the USAID funded program and Creative Associates implementation. It is expected to be made available to the public soon.

In Nangarhar Province, along the eastern border with Pakistan, visits to several accelerated classrooms revealed an enthusiasm for education. Hassina, a teacher in Boisot District, a rich farming area of lush green cauliflower fields, runs her class in a building donated by a local community leader.

"These programs have had a tremendous impact on those students who were left behind," Hassina said of her students who are in the accelerated learning program and are regaining lost years of schooling. "In the past, the situation was not good and these programs were not available to them. But now they are available and all the students come to school with excitement and happiness."

The accelerated learning program's goal this year is to train enough teachers in modern teaching methods to provide classes to more than 170,000 over-age, out of school children. The expanded effort will help these students achieve grade level equivalencies and potentially re-enter the formal school system.

The video also documents remote areas where the effect of another key component of APEP -- the radio-based teacher training program -- has left its mark. Reaching teachers in remote areas, an innovative radio program, "It's Great to Learn", has overcome inaccessible communities by broadcasting via FM, shortwave and satellite to train isolated teachers in child-centered teaching methods in functional literacy, numeracy and life skills.

The radio show promotes education by using drama, song, poetry and short lessons to help teachers improve their knowledge and skills.

Jamila, a teacher from Nangarhar Province shared her thoughts on the radio program. "We heard a story from the "It's Great to Learn" program about a man who was in love with a woman and wanted to marry her. But the woman said she would not marry the man until he promised her to build her a girls' school in the village. The man answered he would. Later on, they got married and the man kept his promise and built a school for girls in the village. The purpose of this story was to open the minds of Afghan mothers and fathers to encourage them to send their daughters to school and to help their communities build new schools. I have seen many girls attending school after listening to this radio program story."

APEP facilitators report an overwhelming positive response to the radio programs. Dil Afroz, a radio production coordinator for "It's Great to Learn" expressed her optimism for her country. "Education is something that brings a person back from a negative to a positive life. If all the Afghans work the way we do from 7 to 9, for the people, for the teachers, for the students, and for the society, along with our foreign friends who are working with us, God willing the future of Afghanistan will be bright," she said.

APEP printed enough books so that students no longer had to share one book among five students as in the past. During the first phase of APEP, Creative Associates had 10.2 million textbooks printed. With a record of success in printing school texts, the Afghan Ministry of Education asked APEP to print more copies to alleviate the chronic shortage of learning materials. This year, APEP will print 16 million more textbooks.

APEP Chief of Party, Peter Parr, said APEP should be seen as a multi-pronged effort to improving education.

Parr said that one should not look at APEP only as teacher training or textbook printing or accelerated learning. "But when you put all of that together and you get the momentum behind all of those three components ... what it means is this appreciation of education by a nation of people who have been disenfranchised, disempowered and who have been purposefully driven apart."

APEP allows Afghan voices to be heard on education and their dreams for their children. Parr said "one of the reasons that the APEP project has moved forward as well as it has, as quickly as it has, and effectively as it has, is because Creative Associates brought on local Afghan development organizations using local knowledge, local skills, local connections, local understanding of the environment."



A P E P



high quality education. They will also provide the Ministry of Education and USAID with reports on the progress and accomplishments of APEP.

The Aguirre team working with APEP, Dr. Jo Ann Intili and Dr. Ed Kissam, have worked extensively with adult education programs teaching literacy and English and with community-based organizations serving Mexican immigrant agricultural workers in the United States. In recent years, the Aguirre team has worked to help Mexican immigrants become involved in the civic life of the American communities where they now live, and to improve health care for more than 700,000 agricultural workers and their families.

Media Support Solutions

Media Support Solutions (MSS) brings together a world-wide group of specialists who have pioneered the use of mass media in humanitarian emergencies and development programs. Much of their work focuses on radio training and programming, but also includes television, print, the Internet and community theatre.



MSS is primarily involved in working with local broadcasters in developing countries to make radio and TV programs which help people understand issues which affect their lives.

MSS conducts research in local communities, helps plan and create effective and entertaining programs, and trains broadcasters on how to research the content, make the programs as interactive as possible, and evaluate their impact.

One of their key aims is to forge closer links between the media, government ministries and development agencies. Another is for organizations in developing countries and recently emerging democracies to initiate and manage these activities themselves. MSS feels that it is important for listeners to feel that the programs are theirs, rather than something imposed by outsiders.

As part of APEP, MSS has daily broadcasts for teachers, providing them information of modern teaching methods and updated material on the subject they teach. These broadcasts, which are called "*It's Great to Learn*" are can be heard over 23 radio stations in Afghanistan, as well as Radio Free Afghanistan. (See page 8 for more information on "*It's Great to Learn*.")



APEP's Accelerated Learning Brings Peace to a Village

In the mid-1980s, a small disagreement arose in the tiny village of Najot, in Baghlan province. The conflict quickly escalated. Two families developed loyalties to rival commanders who armed the villagers. For an entire generation, children from one side of the village were forbidden from playing with children from the other. Violence between the two sides claimed 25 lives.

Several NGOs came to Najot during those years of conflict. But when they saw the tension in the community, they turned away, sensing an insurmountable risk. In 2003, however, when ADA provincial trainer Sultan Mohammed arrived to establish accelerated learning classes as art of APEP, he saw an opportunity.

Mohammed was from the district, and had been the teacher of one of the village's factional leaders.

When he first approached the two rivals to tell them about APEP, he met with the same response from each side – “We’re happy to have the opportunity for our children, but I won’t join if it means we have to work with *them*.” The leaders of the two factions were especially concerned about mentors from the two sides having to sit side-by-side during the training program.

Mohammed had gone through ADA-sponsored training on community development and conflict resolution. He decided to use his skills to benefit the village's children. He strategically selected the commanders of two factions as the APEP classroom mentors. For the first week of the training, he held separate sessions for each of them as they were introduced to the benefits of the program. In the second week, though, Mohammed brought the two men together into the broader training program.

Mohammed also convened meetings with local religious leaders, government officials, and the leaders of the two factions. Together they talked through the conflict and began to set common goals for its resolution. “I knew that the leaders of both sides wanted what was best for their children – education,” Mohammed said. “By giving them the opportunity to work towards that goal, and by focusing their energies on working towards it, I knew that I might be able to help them begin to resolve their differences.”

Now, more than a year after the initiation of the accelerated learning in Najot, 50 of its children are learning to read and write and are working towards reintegration into the school system. Perhaps more importantly, the conflict that raged in the village for almost two decades is fading away. Villagers can move around freely, without worrying about being attacked. Farmers are helping each other in the fields, regardless of family or faction. And the two commanders are working side-by-side.

“It’s completely different now,” says Mohammed Kabir, one of the commanders-turned-mentors. “Now our children can play together without fear, and we can all begin to think about the future.” His former rival, Mullah Mowla, concurs. “We felt before that God was punishing us for our behavior. But now God is rewarding us with this opportunity.” By helping the factions focus on the future, ADA was able to impact the life and the future of the entire village.



APEP's female master trainers who are providing trainings to mentors at the community level

Disabled Teacher Inspires Students

Mohammad Raouf was a young policeman in 1980. A graduate of the Police Academy, his prospects were bright. Then, during the Soviet build-up in Kabul, a bomb from a Soviet helicopter crashed through the roof of his house.

In a blinding flash, the house was destroyed. He heard the screams of others who were trapped, and tried to go to help them. But he could not move, and he was shaking from the most excruciating pain he had ever known. What he did not know at that moment was that his back had been broken, and he would never walk again. Both of his legs had been instantly paralyzed.

Unable to work, and with the country in turmoil, Raouf had neither the money nor the opportunity to seek medical assistance. For many years, the pain was so fierce that it was difficult for him to provide for his children and family.

Now, nearly a quarter century later, Raouf has found a mission in life. He has become an APEP accelerated learning teacher in Khairabad village in the Charasiab district of Kabul province. He teaches a class of 25 boys and girls. His goal is to inspire them to view the limitations of their circumstances as challenges. Just as he has overcome his inability to walk, he wants them to study hard so that they, too, can lead fulfilling lives.

He gives special attention to three of his students who are also physically disabled. Two of them, Sabira, 11, and Varis, 10, were left paralyzed by illness. But 10-year-old Rookiya was, like himself, injured by a bomb.

"When I was four," she recounted recently, "the Taliban attacked our village at midnight, and our house was bombed. I spent a lot of time in the hospital. When I was discharged, I spent months and years at home and was not able to go out. I wanted to learn, but there was no school for girls in the village, and my family did not give me permission to go far. Also, we are poor, and we could not buy the notebooks and pencils that I needed."

When the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC) brought APEP's accelerated learning classes to her village, she was finally able to go to school.

"I am thankful to the people who made this school for us," Rookiya says. Though she is very serious as she speaks, she says she is very happy. "They are working so hard to provide education to all villages in Afghanistan. We admire what they are doing for our country."



APEP's trainers are training village teachers such as Raouf



Furthering the Skills of Local Teachers

Early in 2003, Creative Associates International, Inc. embarked on the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) with a grant from United States Agency for International Development (USAID). APEP's objective is to increase quality of, and access to, primary education. Throughout Afghanistan, there are 105,000 school teachers, teaching around 4.2 million children. Out of these 4.2 million children, about one-third attend first grade. In many schools, the least qualified teachers teach the lowest grades which, unfortunately, sets low standards and low expectations for a nation desperately seeking to have education become the cornerstone of national development.

APEP is furthering the skills of these teachers by equipping them with modern and interactive teaching methods where the students will be the center of teaching.

The legacy of the past is evident with some teachers who still carry sticks and beat children when they are not paying attention. Imran, 28, who attended the APEP teacher's workshop and is teaching the over-aged students at the Qassaba community education center of Nangarhar province said, "I learned the modern teaching methods at the APEP workshop. The program made a huge difference for me and my community as we were stereotyped about how to teach students". There is a saying among Afghans, "Wherever there is a stick, there is a politeness". Imran argued this and said, "After attending the APEP workshop, I realized that this was, indeed, a stereotype, a misleading assumption and an outdated method of teaching".

On visiting Imran Khan, he was teaching math to a class of 25 students at the Qassaba community education center. He had a variety of interesting and colorful items on the mud wall, and he creatively motivated students to be active learners. He was organizing his class, helping the boys move into lines or small groups and moving around the class space to participate in various activities. He actively used child-centered methods by drawing children into exchanges with him and among themselves; Imran enabled students to understand, remember and practice.

Like Imran, 400 APEP trained mentors are teaching 10,000 overage students in the 20 districts of Nangarhar province. They have created 108 village education committees which ensure the sustainability of the community-owned and managed schools for community ownership in the planning, management and successes as a key objective of the APEP approach.



Imran is using teaching materials to teach math in the school at Nangarhar



US Ambassador to Afghanistan mentions APEP's success

APEP's Accelerated Learning and Radio-based Teacher Training received special mention by US Ambassador to Afghanistan. Speaking at the opening of the Dehnow Dehbori School in Kabul, ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad cited the success of the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) which is managed by Creative Associates International, Inc. and funded by USAID.

Afghanistan's education systems and the Afghan children were thrown into chaos during Soviet occupation, the years of civil war, and then the time of Taliban rule. Fear and orthodoxy invaded the classroom. Teachers were denied the freedom to teach the next generation of Afghan citizens in accordance with their training, and equip Afghan children with the knowledge and skills they needed to succeed in the modern world. The denial of education to children was, in effect, a repudiation of the future, keeping a nation stuck in the past.



Patirck Fine, USAID-Afghanistan Mission Director at Model School Inauguration Ceremony

"But today is a new day in Afghanistan, and the tragic destruction of the educational system has come to an end," Khalilzad said. Mentioning the achievements of APEP, the ambassador said;

"More than 25 million textbooks were printed and distributed in 2002 and 2003. Over 16 million textbooks will be printed and distributed this year, an indicator of our commitment to make sure that children and teachers have the resources they need to receive a quality education."

The ambassador went on to say that "52 master trainers have been trained, and 680 provincial trainers have been trained in accelerated learning methods. 6,819 village teachers have been trained to date."

"Since March 2003, 166,000 students have been enrolled in accelerated learning classes, and more than 4.3 million students have been enrolled in schools and learning programs, the largest number in Afghan history," the ambassador said. "In the accelerated learning program, 56% of those students are girls."

Ambassador Khalilzad also mentioned that Radio-based teacher training program is broadcast from 23 local stations and Radio Free Afghanistan nation-wide. These 12 minute programs, entitled "It's Great to Learn," are broadcast in Dari and Pashto, and are listened to by an estimated 25,000 teachers, and a significant number of students and their families.

"After decades of wasted opportunities, benighted leadership, and intellectual darkness, the process of rebuilding Afghanistan's education programs and educating the next generation of leaders will take many years," he said of the education system. "But much progress has already been made, and school children have already benefited from a dramatic change in the educational climate in schools across the country."

Creative Learning & Brentwood High School Donate Students Supplies to Zarghona Girls High School in Kabul, Afghanistan

Kabul: (December 29, 2004): Creative Learning and Brentwood High School, California donated school supplies, art and sports equipment to the students of Zarghona Girls High School in Kabul, Afghanistan. "We thank the students of Brentwood High School in California for their generous donation," says Safia Hayat, the school's assistant headmistress.

The students of Brentwood also prepared letters and photos for the students of Zarghona High School. Safia says that we hope this exchange and donation would be a preamble for a longer relationship between teachers and students of both schools.



Safia, assistant headmistress of the Zarghona Girls High School, is giving away the schools supplies to students.

Zarghona Girls High School was built 64 years ago. Over 200 female teachers are currently teaching more than 6,500 students from grade one to twelve in two shifts. "Zarghona Girls High school is famous for its *quality teaching*", says Safia while distributing the supplies to the Zarghona students in Kabul. "Provision of school supplies is one of the most urgent needs of the education system in Afghanistan and we believe that this donation is a step towards ensuring the continued momentum of *quality teaching* at the school."

This year over 200 female students graduated, 90% of whom went on to join various faculties at Kabul University. The school is expecting around 500 new students for grade one, 70 students for grade 10 and 150 returnees for its new school year which starts on March 21, 2004.

"The need is great," said Safia. "We face a lack of qualified teachers. As an emergency solution some high school graduates were teaching the lower grades, this year." Most teachers migrated to other countries during the Russian invasion and haven't returned. Those who did come back joined other well paid professions. This has left the country with a *shortage of teachers*. "The problem of low salaries and high enrollment of students per class needs to be addressed. We have 70 students per class," says Safia, who is the most senior teacher and herself is a former student of Zarghona Girls High School. "I receive 3,000 Afghanis (65 US \$) per month. How do you rent a house and feed a large family on such a low salary? Despite this, I am committed to being part of the rebuilding process. Afghanistan is reborn and we have to bring up the new child together."

Creative Learning is the non-profit 501 (c) sister organization of Creative Associates International, Inc. Creative Learning provides children and families around the world,, especially in areas of conflict, with innovative learning tools and activities that offer them new possibilities.



Gazar Village, Baghlan Province

Nazar Mohammad is one of five accelerated learning mentors in the small village of Gazar, in the Doshi District of Baghlan Province. Like many other mentors, he is new to the teaching profession. For many years, Mohammad was a high-ranking officer in the Afghan military.

During the years of conflict, Gazar was almost totally abandoned. Most of its residents took refuge in Pakistan. The rice paddies that line riverbed at the bottom of the narrow valley went untended, and many of the houses fell into disrepair.

After the turmoil subsided and the people started coming back, Mohammad also returned, leaving military life behind. As he worked with the others to rebuild the shattered community, he realized that reestablishing life there was more than reconstructing houses, or putting the rice paddies back into production. It meant providing education for the village's children. But the nearest government school was more than 10 kilometers away.



Accelerated Learning students at Nazar Mohammad's class in Gazar Village of Baghlan Province

When he heard about the accelerated learning that was being offered by ADA in Gazar as part of the APEP program, Mohammad decided to become involved. He participated in the special training sessions that taught him modern teaching methods that are at the heart of accelerated learning. He personally paid for the construction of an additional room in his home to serve as one of the classes for APEP.

As importantly, he spoke with parents, both in Gazar and in a neighboring village, who were reluctant to allow their children to attend the classes. Mohammad explained to them how the accelerated learning program could benefit their older children who had had little or no education during the years of conflict. And he especially encouraged them to send their daughters.

Many of the parents could not be convinced. But as he and four other mentors began to hold classes, word spread among the children of the village how much they were learning and how proud that made them feel. Slowly, the parents who had opposed sending their children began to see what the learners were gaining from the classes. Before long, they were all begging to have their own children included.

After several months as a village teacher, Mohammad had an offer to rejoin the military at a senior level. The offer was appealing, but Mohammad refused. He did not want to abandon his commitment to the APEP process or to his students.

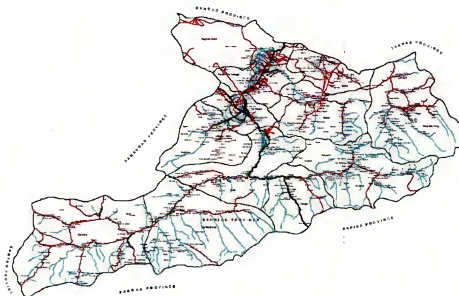


"People treat me with more respect now, and I'm making more of a difference, than I ever did in the military," he said. Like Mohammad, two other mentors in Gazar who are also former military men, chose to remain as teachers when the military invited them to return.

Meanwhile, when the district officer of the Ministry of education visited Mohammad's class, he was deeply impressed by Mohammad's teaching skills and the learner-centered methodology that is central to APEP's accelerated learning. The district officer tried to convince Mohammad to leave APEP and join the formal school system as a teacher. Mohammad refused. He felt we were needed in the accelerated learning program.

The district education officer also sought to have teachers from the formal school system included in the APEP training courses, so that they, too, could learn the new teaching methods used in accelerated learning that stress reasoning over memorization.

ADA, who organizes the APEP teacher training process in Baghlan, was concerned, however, that having all the formal school system teachers participate in the training would make it so crowded that it would dilute its effectiveness. So, instead, ADA set up separate workshops for government teachers. Now the learner-centered style of teaching that has proven successful among the over-age learners of the accelerated learning program has become available to teachers in the formal school system.



Baghlan Province where ADA, APEP's partner, is implementing accelerated learning programs

Another problem that faced Mohammad and the other mentors is that many of the families of Gazar migrate with their herds to pasture for several months of the year, taking their children with them. Many of these children are enrolled in accelerated learning classes. The mentors spoke with the parents and together they worked out special arrangements to continue the classes for the APEP students who were traveling with their families.

It was decided that two of the village's five accelerated learning classes should be relocated to the pasturelands area for the summer. This area is a 12-hour walk from the village along narrow mountain paths. It can be reached only by foot. There are no roads for vehicles.

The mentors who teach these classes do so on a rotating basis, with two mentors spending two weeks at a time out in the pasturelands while the others teach the classes in the village.



Afghan Communities and Local Commanders Support Girls' Education

"Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) will remove the guns from the shoulders of Afghan youth," say community members in Nangarhar, Afghanistan.

Getting rid of guns is the hope of every Afghan. People dream of having a dignified and peaceful life. This hope of community members is materializing with the introduction of the USAID-supported Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) that supports basic education for 170,000 over-aged students over a three-year period.



Zarmina is teaching at accelerated learning class in Nangarhar

Haji Sheer Ali, the local commander of Nangarhar province, has offered his home for the accelerated learning classes. He provided a list of 25 students to be enrolled in the accelerated learning schools, and encouraged his daughter, Zarmina, to teach the class at his own house. Another commander, Haji Malang whose second wife was teaching at the accelerated learning class, said, "I have only a bitter experience of guns. I don't want the future Afghan generation to be victims of guns. APEP inspired me to get rid of the notorious gun, and tell the next generation that progress is made through education". This is a significant difference that APEP is making on the attitudes and behavior of local commanders and communities towards supporting education for girls.

Haji Din Muhammed, the governor of Nangarhar, voiced strong support for the APEP program and said, "I find the program useful, timely and beneficial for out-of-school children, specifically for the girls. However, urgent and more timely programs are needed to meet the challenges facing the returning refugees."

The APEP Accelerated Learning Program has enrolled 10,000 students in Nangarhar with 25 students in each class. At each class visited in Nangarhar, the demand to enter the program was much greater than 25 students. The educational demand generated is encouraging for the expansion of accelerated learning in Nangarhar.

While moving around in the class to organize the students, Zarmina a female mentor of the APEP School at the Qassaba community, enthusiastically and repeatedly spoke of the increased community demand for education. Zarmina reports, "Communities didn't dare send children to school during the communists' rule fearing they would be converted to communism. During the Taliban regime, the ban on girl's education and female employment further worsened the situation of girls and made them more vulnerable. Therefore, lots of children with their parents are waiting in line to get their children educated."

Zarmina very thoughtfully concluded, "If we had had educated mothers, we would have been the leaders of tomorrow."

Accelerated Learning Students and Teachers
(As of December 31, 2004)

Implementer	Province	Total numbers of students enrolled			Total number of teachers trained		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
CoAR	Logar	5,873 (60%)	3,893 (40%)	9,766	107	294	401
CoAR	Ghazni	5,961 (59%)	4,094 (41%)	10,055	197	205	402
CoAR	Sari Pul	4,292 (44%)	5,508 (56%)	9,800	80	322	402
CoAR Total:		16,126	13,495	29,621	384	821	1,205
AWEC	Kabul	7,646 (76%)	2,384 (24%)	10,030	234	159	393
AWEC	Paktia	4,984 (50%)	4,993 (50%)	9,977	44	351	395
AWEC Total:		12,630	7,377	20,007	278	510	788
DHSA	Khost	5,025 (50%)	4,975 (50%)	10,000	43	350	393
DHSA	Dai Kundi	5,979 (59%)	4,021 (41%)	10,000	137	255	392
DHSA Total:		11,004	8,996	20,000	180	605	785
ADA	Nangarhar	4,945 (47%)	5,508 (53%)	10,453	111	289	400
ADA	Baghlan	6,197 (62%)	3,786 (38%)	9,983	182	218	400
ADA	Laghman	7,475 (74%)	2,525 (26%)	10,000	219	181	400
ADA	Kunduz	5,930 (59%)	4,070 (41%)	10,000	171	229	400
ADA	Farah	4,450 (45%)	5,550 (55%)	10,000	178	222	400
ADA Total:		28,997	21,439	50,436	861	1,139	2,000
CHA	Kandahar	2,858 (29%)	7,051 (71%)	9,909	119	280	399
CHA	Faryab	5,818 (58%)	4,181 (42%)	9,999	162	238	400
CHA	Kapisa	7,356 (74%)	2,644 (26%)	10,000	128	272	400
CHA	Parwan	6,466 (65%)	3,534 (35%)	10,000	143	258	401
CHA	Balkh	3,239 (33%)	6,635 (67%)	9,874	93	307	400
CHA Total:		25,737	24,045	49,782	645	1,355	2,000
Grand Total:		94,494	75,352	169,846	2,348	4,430	6,778
Percentage:		56%	44%	100%	35%	65%	100%



Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP)

Radio-based Teacher Training at a Glance

Goal

Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT) communicates modern teaching methods to teachers in Afghanistan. RTT reinforces existing face-to-face teacher training. Most importantly RTT reaches the vast majority of teachers at the remotest areas and female teachers who have fewer training opportunities.

Starting in September 2003, the RTT listeners are teachers, teacher-trainers, university and college students, parents and other professionals.

RTT develops learning skills and creativity to unleash students' potential. It introduces task-based learning and interactive methods to teachers. These are new teaching concepts to replace the old on chalk, talk and learning-by-memory methods. RTT broadcasts daily for teachers of Grade 1 to 6. The topics are General Teaching Methodology, Science and Health, Social Studies, and a more functional approach to literacy and numeric. RTT has weekly dramas that promotes gender, conflict resolution, peace and community participation and other issues, the contribute to the rebuilding of the country.

Supporting Education Ministries

RTT programs are based on the Ministry of Education (MoE) syllabus for primary schools. The broadcast includes a dynamic mix of fact, information, interviews with education professionals, simulated lessons. The radio programs give teachers a sense of professional pride.

RTT is filling a gap while the MoE meets the challenge of providing institutionalized training for pre and in-service teachers including curriculum reform, testing and certification. RTT education advisers contribute regularly to the work of MoE through Teacher Education Program (TEP).

Achievements

- In 2003, RTT produced and broadcast 148 programs which aired twice weekly in both Dari and Pashto.
- In May 2004, the schedule expanded to daily broadcasts, which led to 594 programs being aired in 2004.
- In part to measure the impact of RTT, a formal radio-based course has been offered to supplement the teacher training broadcasts. Nearly 10,000 teachers registered for the course.
- Interestingly, 30% of the teachers trained to lead APEP accelerated learning classes also teach in the formal school system. Many say they are also regular listeners to RTT broadcasts. As a result, the teaching methodologies being offered by APEP are finding their way into the formal school system.

Impact

- Introduced learner centered approach
- Reinforced basic education concepts, teaching skills & teacher roles, education for all, assessing learning, learning theories and school management issues via radio programming for primary school teachers nationwide
- Promoted positive attitudes toward basic education, especially girls' education, as a key to nation-building
- Assisted communities and schools in providing educational opportunities for over age students through accelerated learning



Afghanistan's Teacher Training Chief Praises APEP's Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT) Program

APEP's Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT) program received a ringing endorsement recently from Mr. Abdul Sattar Hayat, the Director General of the Teacher Training Department in Afghanistan's Ministry of Education.

Speaking to the APEP staff in Kabul, Mr. Hayat saluted the RTT program as a very effective means for providing teacher training to remote areas.

"As it has been appraised by His Excellency the Minister, I like it. I support it. I appreciate it," he said of the RTT program. "I hope this program can continue and be supported by the Ministry of Education and the donors who are providing financial support."

Mr. Hayat went on to say that "having a stable country is not possible without qualified teachers who can provide a high standard of education." He noted that communities, parents, and students themselves are all demanding qualified teachers. But attracting new teachers to the profession has proven difficult, primarily because wages are low.

The RTT program helps spread the idea of becoming a teacher to people in rural areas who may not have considered it before.

Afghanistan, Mr. Hayat stated, has only 100,525 teachers for some 5.2 million students. This leaves a classroom ratio of about 53 students per teacher. But in some communities, as many as 70 students were in a single class. The internationally accepted optimum is 35 students per teacher.

Mr. Hayat said he lives in fear of the day when a parent asks a child what she learned in school today, and she says "nothing." Consequently, he is pleased that APEP is helping to organize in-service training to help teachers strengthen their skills through the Teacher Education Program.

This program will introduce them to new methods of teaching that are centered more on teaching children to reason than on the traditional method of memorization and rote knowledge. The Teacher Education Program is scheduled to begin offering a nation wide one month in-service training sessions in September.

Mr. Hayat proudly noted that in an in-service training recently held for teachers in Baghlan Province, nearly 75% of the 900 teachers who participated were women.

He also mentioned that the Ministry of Education has established Teacher Training Institutes in 19 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces to date, with more planned. The Ministry also operates five In-Service Teacher Training Centers in Kabul, where some 3,000 teachers are now participating in programs. These will graduate in September 2004 and will be issued the certificates of grade 14th.

The willingness of teachers to attend such in-service training, he says, "shows that teachers have recognized their responsibility to be qualified."

Mr. Hayat also welcomed the idea of using the RTT program model for offering English language instruction nationwide. "We know it works," he said. "We must use it."



Mr. Hayat speaks at the APEP Staff Exchange, Kabul, Afghanistan

Teachers agree that “It’s Great to Learn”

Khadjia teaches at the Naz-ana School in Jalalabad. As a child, most the teachers of her classes had a very stern manner and treated their pupils in a heavy-handed way. When Khadjia became a teacher herself, she thought that was the way she should treat her students.

Then she started to listen to the radio program called “It’s Great to Learn.” The program is broadcast seven days a week in both Dari and Pashto on 23 radio stations all over Afghanistan.

The program presents a teacher giving a lesson to a group of students. Khadija was amazed at what she heard. The teacher, instead of being harsh, demonstrated kindness and patience. She praised her students when they did something well. And the students in the program responded with enthusiasm about what they were learning.



Khadjia wondered if this was something that could only happen on the radio, or whether it would work in her class, as well. Slowly she introduced some of the things she heard on “It’s Great to Learn.” Like the students on the program, her own pupils responded with a new interest in learning.

She found their excitement contagious. Teaching had always been something she liked to do, but now she entered her classroom each day with a new sense of happiness.

Her colleagues at the school noticed the changes that were taking place with her students, and they asked her about them. Khadija suggested that they should



Female Radio Researchers Lead the Way

Mahjan and Parveen are widows. Their husbands were killed during the years of conflict. Looking for a way to support their children, the two women have become researchers for an innovative project that is training teachers in Afghanistan by radio.

The Radio-based Teacher Training Project is a component of the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP). It was launched in September 2003. Its goal is to provide basic training to those in remote areas who want to become teachers, but have no opportunity to study. Many of those who are participating are women.



The Radio-based Teacher Training Project broadcasts a series of programs called *It's Great to Learn* through local radio networks in four provinces. *It's Great to Learn* promotes education by using drama, song, poetry and short lessons to help teachers improve their knowledge and skills.

After so many years of fighting there have been few opportunities to train teachers in Afghanistan. APEP's Radio-based Teacher Training is proving to be an effective way to reach large numbers quickly. It has the support of the provincial educational authorities and has had cooperation from the local pedagogical institutes.

To find out how regularly teachers are listening to *It's Great to Learn* and whether they are applying what they learn, the Radio-based Teacher Training team has recruited and trained a group of eight local researchers to conduct research. Four of the researchers are women, including Mahjan and Parveen.

"I know we're going to find a lot of teachers eager to switch on the radio and listen to *It's Great to Learn*," stated Parveen.

"Our teachers have been isolated and forgotten for years," noted Mahjan. "Now we are part of APEP's efforts to help provide better education for our children. This is the kind of work that brings respect."

Parveen, a mother of six children, added that "when women see us out and about working, I know they will be encouraged." This newly-trained cadre of female field researchers is confident, happy to work, and eager to help train new teachers.

Dr. Muhammad Akbar, the Program Manager, says he was surprised and encouraged to see so many women coming forward to fill these research posts.

"I thought it would be hard after years of Taliban oppression to persuade women to leave their homes for a training workshop in the capital, Kabul and then to travel around, often in remote rural areas, to collect data from schools," he said recently.

So what persuaded the female researchers to come forward? Parveen and Mahjan say it was a necessary decision. "We need to feed our families," Mahjan stated quietly, "and we want to help Afghanistan move away from war." Parveen agreed. "This project means a lot for me, and my family but it is also important for Afghanistan," she said.



US military donates 10,000 radios to the Afghanistan Primary Education Program

The U.S. military has donated 10,000 radios to the Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP). The radios have been distributed to teachers in 18 provinces who can now tune into APEP's Radio-based Teacher Training (RTT) Program. Seven days a week, the RTT program airs 12-minute broadcasts in Pashto and Dari. Teachers are listening across Afghanistan, many of whom have had only basic training. They are able to hear the latest ideas on learner-centered education, and get updated information in the subject areas they teach.

Once a week, the RTT program broadcasts an episode in a serial drama that reinforces the idea that education is important. Informal research is showing that the dramas are attracting audiences that reach far beyond the teachers themselves. Afghans of all backgrounds, and especially youngsters, are tuning in for the entertainment the dramas provide. It is a rare opportunity for young listeners to hear others of their own age on the radio. All RTT programs feature a cast that includes a male and female teacher and half-dozen youngsters.



One of the staunchest supporters of the RTT program has been the governor of Paktika Province, Gulab Mangal. A former journalist who used to broadcast on Radio Free Afghanistan, Gov. Mangal personally asked APEP for 2,000 radios. He then had them distributed to teachers in 22 districts of Paktika. In the following weeks, he monitored both the RTT programming itself and the reactions his local teachers had to it.

"Radio has the potential of making positive changes in people's attitudes," Gov. Mangal stated recently during a visit to Kabul where he met with APEP staff. "When they hear the instructions to teachers coming over the radio, they know that education must be important. They want education for themselves and their children. And when they hear on the radio that girls are getting education, they want that for their own daughters as well."



Gov. Mangal had come to Kabul to finalize details for establishing the first local radio station in his province. At present, the province is served by national radio broadcasts. But Gov. Mangal says that he wants to make sure that even the remotest regions of Paktika get coverage with a clear signal.

In the village of Sultani, about 25 kilometers outside Paktika's capital, Sharen, village elders and the local *shura* have listened to the RTT programs and have decided that their girls and young women should be educated. In a recent breakthrough development, the leaders of Sultani also announced that all women in the village should vote in the upcoming national elections.

"We talk about building a nation," Gov. Mangal said. "And here you can see it happening before your own eyes. Radio carries the message to the villages. The villages are ready."

The RTT program is managed by Media Support Solutions, a British NGO that is one of APEP's implementing partners. The radios were distributed by APEP's other partners who manage APEP's accelerated learning activities across Afghanistan. APEP is funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

RTT BROADCAST OUTLETS

Radio stations	Location	Coverage area	Owner	Frequencies	Broadcast times
Radio Azadi	national	national	national	1296 KHz, 100 MHz	12:45 pm (P) 1:15 pm (D)
Radio Afghanistan	national	national	government	1107 KHz, 92.3MHz	4:15-5:00 pm
Sharq	Jalalabad	50km	Internews community/ commercial	87.6 MHz	9:30am, 7:30pm
Laghman	Laghman	10km	government	84.3 MHz	8:10 pm
Nangarhar	Nangarhar	50km	government	999 KHz, 93MHz	7:30 am (P) 8:45 pm (D)
Mili Peygham	Logar	50km	Internews community/ commercial	84 MHz	7:30 pm
Kilid	Kabul	30km	community	88 MHz	4:15 pm
Trajmeer	Baghlan	40km	community	91.3MHz	7:00 am 7:00 pm
Zohra	Kunduz	40km	IMPACS community	95.5 MHz	10:30 am 2.30 pm
Maimona	Faryab	50km	government	594 KHz, 92.1MHz	6:30 pm
Rabia Balkhi	Balkh	20km	IMPACS community	87.9 MHz	1:00 pm
Nowbahar Balkh	Balkh	30km	Internews community/ commercial	88.5 MHz	7:00 pm
Radio Kandahar	Kandahar	60km	government	882 KHz, 85.2 MHz	5:30 am
Suli Pajgham	Khost	40km	Internews community/ commercial	88.2 MHz	6:30 am
Gardiz	Paktya	100 km	government	100.4 MHz	6:30 am
Sadai Adalat	Ghoor	20km	Internews community/ commercial	88.9 MHz	5:30 am
ISAF Kunduz	Kunduz	80km	ISAF	80.4 MHz	5:45 pm (P) 6:45 pm (D)
Sulh Jabal Saraj	Parwan	60 km	Internews community/ commercial	96 MHz	6:00 am 4:00 pm
Kara Bagh	Kabul	60 km	Internews community/ commercial	91.3 MHz	6:00 am 4:30 pm
Bamyan	Bamyan	50 km	Internews community/ commercial	88.1 MHz	8:00 pm
Khoust	Khoust	60 km	government	1200 KHz	8:10 pm
Kounar	Kounar	40km			5:30 pm
Ghazni	Ghazni	100 km	government		
Badakhshan	Badakhshan	40 km	government	105.8 MHz	9:30 pm
Dai Kundi	Dai Kundi	40 km	Internews community/ commercial		7:00 pm
Yawali ghag	Wardak	40km	Internews community/ commercial	89 MHz	6:00 pm
Zafar	Kabul	40km	Internews community/ commercial	96.5 MHz	
Aomou	Badakhshan	40km	Internews community/ commercial		

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